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ARCHITECTURE AT RICE

WILLIAM H. RICE, ARCHITECT

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

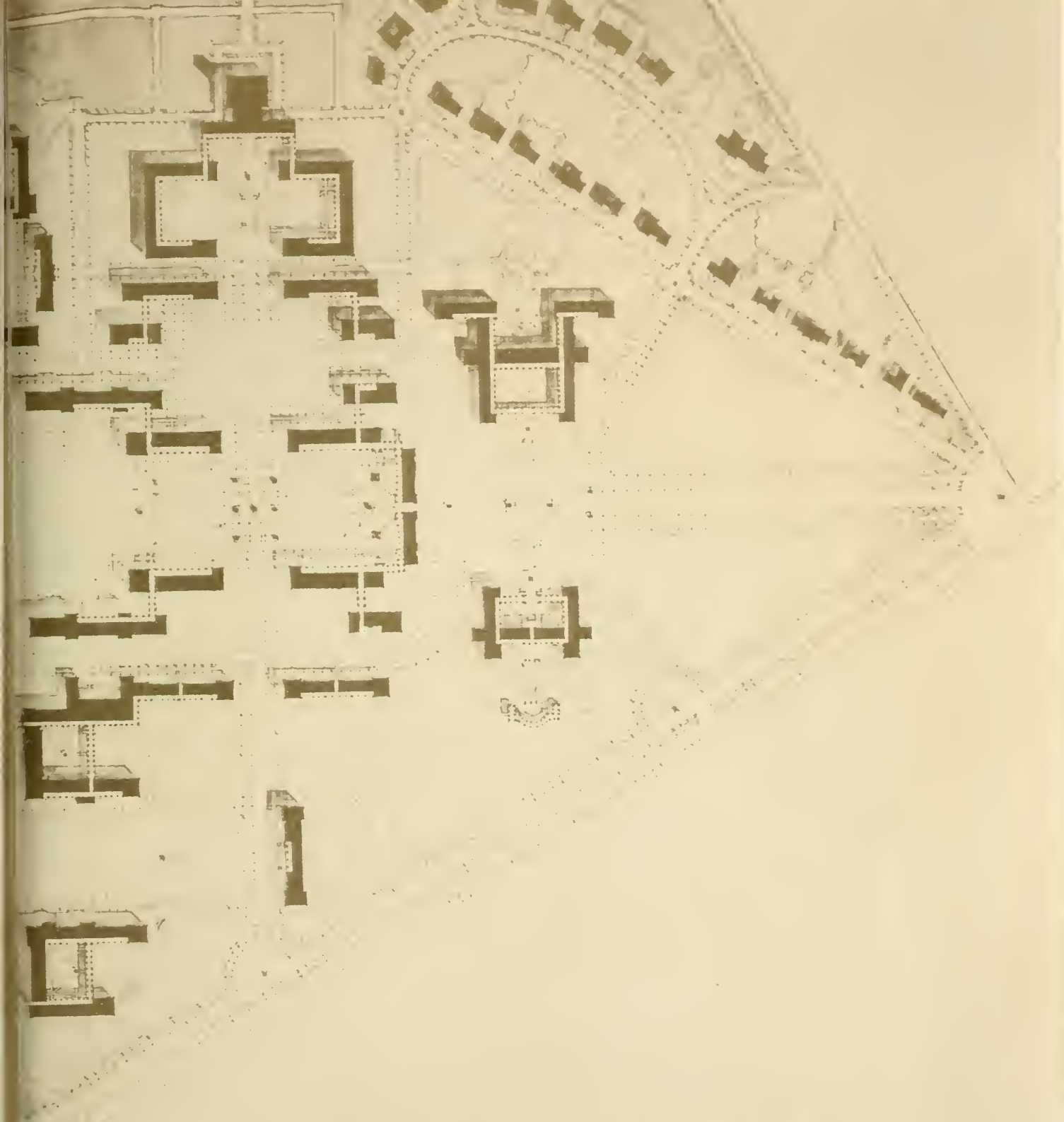
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ARCHITECTURE AT RICE

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12	PROGRAM	Paul Jacques Grillo
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ARCHITECTURE AT RICE


CORYL LaRUE



GENERAL PLAN
WILLIAM M. RICE INSTITUTE
HOUSTON TEXAS

SCALE 1" = 100'

CFAM GOODHVE AND FERGUSON ARCHITECTS
BOSTON AND NEW YORK



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A R C H I T E C T V R E

AT RICE UNIVERSITY

DESIGNATES A SERIES OF REPORTS
ON THOUGHTS AND INVESTIGA-
TIONS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF
ARCHITECTURE. IT IS PUBLISHED IN
THE BELIEF THAT THE EDUCATION
OF ARCHITECTS CAN BEST BE
ADVANCED IF TEACHERS, STUDENTS,
PRACTITIONERS, AND INTERESTED
LAYMEN SHARE IN WHAT THEY ARE
THINKING AND DOING.

HOUSTON, TEXAS

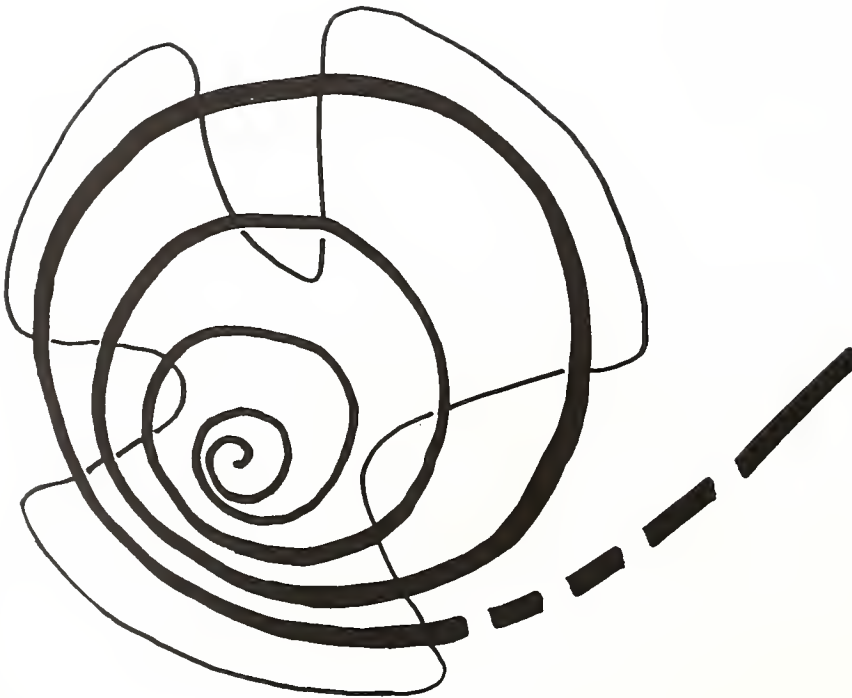
APRIL, 1964

an EVALUATION of the
PRECEPTORSHIP PROGRAM
in ARCHITECTURE
RICE UNIVERSITY

The Rice Preceptorship Program in Architecture is now in its third year. Each preceptor (architect) and each preceptee (student) has submitted a report about his activities and the program. These reports have been studied in terms of immediate reaction and projected influence on the participants and the profession. The following synopsis and evaluation is published at the request of the participants and members of the profession in the hope that self-criticism and the sharing of experiences will be of mutual benefit. The intent of the Preceptorship Program — the projection of empathy into the student-architect association — is to provide an insight into professional leadership.

by CORYL LaRUE JONES
Department of Architecture, Rice University
April 1964

THE PRECEPTORSHIP PROGRAM?



A student spends two to three weeks with a practicing architect, living in his home, working in his office, shadowing him day and night. This is a preceptorship. So what! What is so important about a two week trip from academia? Why two weeks? Why live in the architect's home? What does a student gain from such a venture?

The student begins as a point in experience. This point has definite position in space, but possesses neither size, shape, nor orientation. A graphic symbol used to illustrate the teaching and learning processes of architecture at Rice is an ever-enlarging spiral, a cornucopia of educational experiences overlaid on a figure representing the three study areas of architectural education: design, technology, and management. In this educational vortex the student (the point) moves in a cyclical path as he is introduced to new material, improves, enlarges and intensifies his approach and comprehension of the profession of architecture each year. This "point" is effervescent and unless disciplined its movement is spasmodic, erratic (random), and magnetic. The student's sense of orientation is affected by the magnetism of personalities and ambitions. Since the real purpose of education is not just to feed facts to babes, but to teach each to think, to show each the value and rightness of ethics, respect and responsibility, the problem of orientation is of prime importance. It is in this context that Mr. William W. Caudill, Chairman, of the Department of Architecture, of Rice University, devised the Rice Preceptorship Program to help orient the student into the profession.

The university strives to educate students with the best possible faculty, under the best possible conditions, but this is not the world of Candide. Architecture is a professional course in which the graduate is immediately placed in the internship of a licensed practitioner to prove his mettle before being licensed to practice on his own. The law of averages, financial and social pressures, and the inclinations of brilliant youth can, if not placed in proper correlation, produce either a cynical or blasé human product. A means was needed to remove the "chance" from this indoctrination. Students with potential for professional leadership should be indoctrinated by the best in the profession so each will develop an empathy with the highest caliber of architect, see what the profession means to his family, and what his responsibilities are to society. The establishment of this close, personal relationship between student and architect would teach the student to discern between what is merely accepted from what is really expected from a competent professional and show him that architecture is a profession of dreams, mud, money, and taxes.

Dr. William H. Masterson, former Dean of the School of Humanities, Rice University, commented on the frustrated shamrock design, "That is a good design to symbolize your curriculum. It is going in circles, but what does the broken line mean? Is that to show the disintegration of character after graduation when the student goes into practice?" This is not a point of humor. This disintegration occurs in too many cases. Each student envisions himself as the savior of mankind from ugliness. With

all this idealism, disillusionment tries to drown the graduate either in apathy and cynicism or in personal, prideful aggrandisement unless he is properly equipped to cope with reality and maintain his standards. The faltering line, the career path, is often the disintegration of character upon graduation.

Mr. Caudill instigated the Preceptorship Program to help span the cataclysmic gap between school and practice. The preceptorship uses idealism to teach realism by utilizing empathy of student and architect. Conversely, it uses realism to help the student retain some of his collegiate idealism. The student lives as an architect for two weeks to see how the architect must deal in technology, psychology, ethics, ethnics as well as aesthetics and the more tangible tools and skills of his profession.

The progression from building blocks to buildings begins when the child is first introduced to architecture — the architect is often "the man I want to be." To the collegian, the practicing professional is the professor, the visiting critic and the visiting lecturer who deals in paper and theory. As an adjunct of architectural education at Rice, the student is encouraged to go out armed with his talent (but usually only latent skills at this stage) and copies of his student work to solicit summer employment. The employed student is the chart-maker, the model builder, the tracer of drawings and the errand boy. This is as it should be, but what about the graduate when he puts out his talent as a professional and his only administrative experience is on the inquisitioned-side of an interview? What does he know of office management? Who or what is a client? How can he find one? What does he do with him when he has one? What about the corporation client? Money? Lawsuits? Books can't teach the student how to feel confident when meeting a critical stranger nor how to get this stranger to go away feeling a sense of trust, enough to have the stranger invest his savings and future income by commissioning the young practitioner for his new home, office, hospital, bank or master plan.

Mr. Caudill called upon his professional associates to assist him in implementing the preceptorship. He neither inveighed, reimbursed, nor pre-conditioned the professionals he invited to be preceptors. Nine men in three years have accepted what might be considered a one-way bargain to assist in the education of students in architecture because each man accepted a personal responsibility to his profession.

The Preceptorship Program has been likened to the lath house used by the nurseryman to provide an environment in which sapling trees grow strong and are conditioned for harsh outdoor elements. The purpose was to give the students real experience in architecture to supplement synthetic experience of the classroom. The guidelines were first established in "The Preceptorship Program," ARCHITECTURE AT RICE No. 3, December, 1961, and published in the March, 1962, issue of the A.I.A. JOURNAL. The ground rules were flexible and simple: the student was to participate in all activities in which the architect was involved, to learn of the responsibilities, professional, civic, and domestic — yes, architects have homes,

families, pets and hobbies, even though many live out of suitcases and dine at the conference table. The student was to experience the problems of management, economics, contracting, bidding, legal matters as well as the problems of designing for live clients with opinions of their own. These basic tenets have remained unchanged.

The preceptees are selected from the fourth, fifth, or sixth year students in architecture by a faculty committee on the basis of academic background, character, and potential for professional leadership. The preceptee is designated an "Honor Student in Architecture."

The preceptor is an architect recognized as a leader in his profession, a principal in private practice and a man willing to accept a personal responsibility in architectural education. Each preceptor has one preceptee per year. The appointments granted by Dr. Kenneth S. Pitzer, President, Rice University, are for terms of two years. The following is a list of the preceptors, their firms, and their terms of appointment:

Richard L. Aeck, F.A.I.A. Aeck Associates, Atlanta, Georgia	1962 - 1965
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O'Neil Ford, F.A.I.A. O'Neil Ford Associates, San Antonio, Texas	1962 - 1965
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Charles Granger, A.I.A. Fehr & Granger, Austin, Texas	1962 - 1963
--	-------------

David G. Murray, A.I.A. Murray-Jones-Murray, Tulsa, Oklahoma	1962 - 1965
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George F. Pierce, Jr., F.A.I.A. Pierce & Pierce, Houston, Texas	1962 - 1965
--	-------------

John M. Rowlett, A.I.A. Caudill, Rowlett and Scott, Houston, Texas	1963 - 1964
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E. Davis Wilcox, A.I.A. E. Davis Wilcox and Associates, Tyler, Texas	1962 - 1963
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Two new appointments were made in January, 1964:

Lawrence B. Perkins, F.A.I.A. Perkins & Will, Chicago, Illinois	1964 - 1965
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Henry L. Wright, F.A.I.A. Kistner, Wright & Wright, Los Angeles, California	1964 - 1965
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The basic outline for the Preceptorship Program followed these ground rules:

1. The student is accepted by the architect as an individual and colleague.
2. The preceptor is responsible for a thorough indoctrination of the student into the profession.
3. The student enters the preceptorship with humility, an open mind, a willingness to work, study, discuss and observe on a day and night basis.
4. The preceptee does not receive pay for work done, but the preceptor is financially responsible for the student's transportation to and from the university, his board and room, laundry, and \$15 for miscellaneous expenses for the two to three week period.
5. It is preferred that the student live in the home of the preceptor.
6. The preceptorship visit is for a two to three week period.
7. The student participates in the office routine and work — even at night if necessary to experience the pressures of the architect's regimen.
8. Immediately following the preceptorship visit, both student and architect submit short reports to the chairman of the department of architecture.

The reports submitted by the participants were treated as confidential, but the request became unanimous that the comments be published because of the value of self-criticism, appraisal of the activities of the participants, and the quests for information from educators and practitioners.

A consensus shows that the student's living in the architect's home is the most unique ingredient because only after the official office hours do the real pressures appear in the manner they influence domestic and civic areas of the architects life. As one preceptee, L. James McCullar stated, "Only the son of an architect could ever have the experiences in architecture that the preceptorship has given me." This is the difference between working as an architect and living as one.

Each preceptee wanted to see as many presentations and conferences with the clients as possible so the client's relationship would be more obvious.

One preceptor wanted the guidelines more clearly defined for preceptor and preceptee.

Another preceptor wanted to correspond with one of the student's architectural professors so he could individualize his preceptorship to the needs of his preceptee.

One professor expressed a desire for the preceptor to visit the university prior to the faculty selection of participants so all parties concerned — faculty, students, and architects — could personally acquaint themselves with the educational program and the professional approach.

Most architects and students commented that two to three weeks seemed to be ample time for the preceptorship. Only one preceptor stated that two weeks was too limited a time period. In general, any less than two weeks would be too short, any more would prove to be a strain financially on the architect and emotionally on his family. This would be a hindrance to acceptance of the preceptorship appointment.

For the student, an extension of the time limitation would be an academic burden because the visit is preferably scheduled during the spring term as an academic function — in addition to, not in lieu of academic responsibilities. Only in special cases could an extension be considered. Fortunately the majority of the preceptees are fifth year students whose academic loads are almost entirely architectural. Also, a longer time, if the two men were not compatible, would be a major defeat for both.

One of the greatest challenges in the preceptorship is the delicate balance of personalities. Preceptee John Kell stated, "I feel that the selection of preceptors and their matching with the preceptees is the critical make or break point of the program...because 'impressions' are tied to personalities and these impressions must be good for the student to benefit." Kell was more than satisfied with his preceptorship and felt that his preceptor, David G. Murray of Tulsa, "would be an inspiration to any student."

Of the first 13 preceptorships, 12 were successes and only one was cause for concern. This one borderline case might have appeared a disaster to the student but it made him realize that architecture, as well as art, is a business. The student, Howard Eilenberger, was cognizant of this awareness when he wrote his report:

I preface my praise of the Preceptorship Program with a qualifying statement: as I have never worked with an architect during summers nor had any previous association with architects other than those in a professional role, I entered the program full of naïvete and with simple faith that the architect somehow was still an artist, not a businessman. Much of what I observed depressed me, repulsed me, or discouraged me, but whether I was glad or sad, I was always aware that these things, too, were a part of architecture, and I was better prepared for the future for having seen them at this time. An educational experience does not have to be a pleasant one to be beneficial, and in every respect my participation in the program was an educational experience...If architecture is indeed a 'patient search,' I feel the Preceptorship Program has illuminated enough of the field for me to gain more meaningful bearings and ideas around which to redefine my goals.

Since the test of the validity of the Preceptorship Program as an approach to architectural education is the orientation of the preceptee-graduate in practice, the manner in which this preceptee has involved himself in practice does credit to the program. It was a shock to him at first that architects have offices to manage and construction to supervise. The preceptorship gave him a preview before he made his final commitment to architecture.

If a person were allowed the liberty of summation on such meager evidence as 13 preceptorships, the preceptorships, as a didactic tool, seem to be the most influential when the experience borders on the traumatic. In other words, a student receptive to a divergent architectural philosophy in practice often gains more than a student who either does not acknowledge the grounds for criticism or innovation or who has compromised within himself to "agree" with the practitioner's philosophy. One gains little in experience if the seed of criticism is not present. Also, unless there is humility, an experience can not be assimilated by the student.

In a program evaluation of this type, the best words of evaluation come from the participants. The real evaluation, however, is the success or failure of the student upon graduation and the assumption of his responsibilities in architectural practice. It will take many years for the first students to earn their licenses and enter private practice, but the preceptees of the first two years have already given indication of the maturing process inherent in the preceptorship.

The Rice Preceptorship Program is a special program for special people. A natural deviation would be special preceptorships. Such a situation first arose when one of the regular preceptors, Richard Aeck of Atlanta, offered travel and payment for several students to go to Atlanta to work in Aeck's office on the Georgia Pavilion for the New York World's Fair. The extreme discipline of such a regimen was met with favor (note the copy of the letter on the facing page from L. James McCullar, one of the students participating in this special preceptorship). These special preceptorships, however, must have the aura of unique educational experience which can not be gained in any other fashion. The experience must involve perhaps special travel, special design program, or the opportunity to meet and work with persons beyond regular office work. A current special preceptorship for a fifth year student entails a three week design session in Santiago, Chile, on a community facilities project. The responsibilities placed upon the special preceptees are great, and the value is equivalent to the opportunity.

Quotes from the reports submitted by the participants over the last three years convey their enthusiasm, perception and dedication. Mr. Richard Aeck served as preceptor for Philip T. Y. Chang in 1962. Philip Chang, originally from



SSOCIATES / ARCHITECTS / ATLANTA
180 techwood drive, nw / zone 3

Dear Mr. Canfield.

The last ten days have been very stimulating - if not downright intoxicating. To give an idea of the tempo, I arrived here at noon Thursday, and worked until 10:30 that night. (Confort, Mike and I have only taken Christmas day off so far.) I started out doing a clay model; then I spent half a day up planning; then I took my best scheme and developed it to model stage; and now Mike and I are working together with Mr. Aeck's chief designer on what appears to be the final scheme. Needless to say, the present scheme isn't the one that I developed, but Mike and I are influencing it as much as we can. Today we sat in on a conference with state officials about the project; and in these days we have to complete another model for a conference with the Governor elect of Georgia, no less. All in all, it has been a very rewarding experience - a more valuable experience than a preceptorship, I think. On my own case especially, I appreciate the discipline of working within a framework.

Mr. Aeck has treated us very well. Christmas day he loaned us the office car to drive to Augusta to visit a family I know there. He has treated us very much as equals, which I really appreciate - by taking us to lunch with him, etc., which has been an education in itself.

I would like to thank you for sending me to Atlanta, and more than that, for placing confidence in me.

Sincerely,
Jim McQuillan.

P.S. Honestly, I may hate to think of returning to Houston.



The World Health Organization Program as an approach to health care was used as a model for the concept of graduate in practice, particularly in supervised hours for which architects have offices to provide supervision. The program gave them a preview of what they would do in their own offices.

of the "flat" hypothesis. In other words, a flat universe is not only possible, but it is the most natural one. In other words, a flat universe is the most natural one. In other words, a flat universe is the most natural one.

P.2. Howard J. ...
member of ...

Hong Kong, had been in the United States for only a brief time. His poignant use of a language new to him expressed his reactions in words undisguised by jargon and platitudes. This is from one of his letters.

The preceptorship program has become the most unique and unbelievable success to me. This program is the most wonderful thing happened in my life.

His report which was graphically illustrated and included samples of the type of work he was doing for Mr. Aeck continued his praise for the program and Mr. Aeck.

As a result of seeing my work, Mr. Aeck wanted me to do some sketches for his I.B.M. building which is in the designing stage. I was really enjoying on this work as I could be able to do some thinking besides just straight drawing...It (the preceptorship) is the most stimulating thing happened to me. I appreciate very much the opportunity in this country. One works hard enough will have his future...A very strange feeling came to me as this is the last moment to spend with my preceptor. Mr. Aeck's personality was very respectful to me and his voices and his faces still around me all the time.

(Mr. Aeck in his office)



Mr. Aeck's letter cited some of the activities in which Philip was involved:

He observed the designing of a building to be enlarged and remodeled, production of working drawings on others, talked with the specifications writer, and visited construction jobs with the supervising architect. He was assigned a drafting table and studied the drawings of projects already completed. He was asked to make free hand sketches on two or three projects...Mr. Chang attended many conferences with me — those with clients, attorneys, consultants, and the many others demanded of a practitioner. There developed a facet of this program that had not occurred to me — clients, contractors and others, when Philip's presence was explained, appeared to be flattered that a representative of Rice would be included in the inner workings of their project. This was evidenced more than once by their voluntary explanations or questions to assure that Philip understood.

The reports from O'Neil Ford's office in San Antonio brought envy from students and faculty alike. His first two preceptees, John Q. Lawson, 1962, and James Armstrong, 1963, provided rare insights into the character and characters of Ford's office.

Two houses on King William Street make up the office in the old section of San Antonio. Every room is stuffed with desks, drafting tables, filing cabinets, material samples, books, magazines, newspapers, plans, and the most wonderfully varied group of people I have ever met in such a small place. Mr. Ford is one of the liveliest and most exuberant as well as the most vitally interested people I have ever met. He peers from behind his horn-rimmed glasses with all the sly humor of St. Nick, which seldom does much to hide the tough rambunctiousness, the broad knowledge, nor the warm humanity of the man. He seems to love the people and delights in waving to pedestrians and other motorists as he drives around San Antonio in his 1925 Bentley open sedan. Heads turn, people wave back or at least smile, and you get the feeling almost of being in a parade with a well-loved local official. Mr. Sam Zisman might well be a highly intelligent leprechaun masquerading as a very successful and very busy planning consultant...Much telephoning went on. It seems the practice of architecture is primarily conducted by telephone...Went to Trinity for conference with Dr. Lauree, president, and discussed work on a number of buildings. We returned to the office where I left Mr. Ford on the phone...At a party I had the opportunity of a long talk with Professor Chermayeff on architecture and planning... In retrospect, I can say that if all the preceptees are lucky enough to have for their preceptors men with the vitality of O'Neil Ford, then I firmly believe that the Preceptorship Program is probably the one most significant educational innovations that Rice or any school has instituted. I feel that no experience of mine has been as personally enjoyable, as professionally interesting, or as educationally worthwhile as the two weeks I spent with O'Neil Ford. Few, I believe, could resist being carried along by the enthusiasm, the love of life and love of work of the man. His is the life which all should lead, but few attain — the full life. (Armstrong)

...I met Ford at the A.I.A. meeting. Bartlett Cocke gave a report of research in California on testing creative ability of 40 outstanding architects of whom Ford was one. Ford added his more humorous insight...Flew to Dallas and visited with contractor, lunched with Cecil Green of Texas Instruments and discussed his new house being designed by Ford, visited the synagogue, Wright's theater and house, apartments, Stone's house, etc., in Dallas...Picked up Mrs. Ford and off to a dinner given by the West Side San Antonians honoring the Supreme Court Judges of Texas. Met the judges and political friends of Mrs. Ford...Spent afternoon in office drawing... O'Neil Ford, the look of the country boy in his eyes, the artist, poet, mechanic, aviator, technician, folklorist, talker, listener, a wonderful man who has read enough to know a lot of things and lived enough and done enough to understand most of them...I can not help but feel that the success of the Rice Preceptorship Program depends a great deal upon the choice of the preceptor. Ford was certainly a good one. He was personally stimulating and he represents a very special type of educator...The preceptorship, I feel, has been very successful. The desired aims were more than fulfilled, the method worked, and the ground rules were flexible enough to insure a successful educational experience. As a part of my architectural education, the experience of the past two weeks has been invaluable. As a personal experience, it has been one of the most stimulating and pleasant two weeks of my life. (Lawson)

O'Neil Ford's reports on the preceptorships, as Jim Armstrong might have predicted, were by telephone.

Some of the preceptorship visits were oriented toward less flamboyant but no less enjoyable and active associations. The variety ranged from Civil Defense road surveys to princely treatment.

It goes without saying that before graduation and before assumption of the lowest rung in the professional ladder, it is quite pleasant to be treated as a prince of architecture.

Chalmers G. Long, Jr. Preceptee

Mr. Long seemed to get quite a revelation in observing the business side of our operation as well as the basic interest in design.

George F. Pierce, Jr., Preceptor

Most of two days was spent on the road conducting a fallout shelter survey for the government which really means looking at basements in old buildings. Two more days were spent at the Texas Society of Architects' Workshop in College Station. I was in the office enough to see the office procedure, the mounds of paper work, the many salesmen, and the frantic contractors who "will or won't", "can or can't" do something on a job. It was easy to see how the days grow into nights.

George E. Fowler, Jr., Preceptee

He is a little weary of traveling and meeting with building committees, I believe, but he is learning that architecture is not all a bed of roses and a profession of glamour. I hope we will not discourage him too much.

Charles Granger, Preceptor

There is a great deal I learned, but most of it won't come into actual use for some time. This knowledge is not completely involved in architecture either. Living with the family is an experience in life...and I am grateful for having had the opportunity to participate in this most worthwhile program.

Howard F. Itzkowitz, Preceptee

The opportunity to live in the architect's home has been commended previously in this report because it allows the student to follow the architect into his overall living pattern. John Kell, preceptee with David Murray in 1962, brought up another point about the architect's family.

It is encouraging to realize that an architect can be a successful designer and still have a normal family life, especially after notable examples of successful architects who never achieved the latter. This realization was, perhaps, as important as any other I received from the preceptorship program. The 'formal' learning was achieved by an informal program of gathering 'impressions.' These impressions are to me more valuable than any 'facts' I obtained, for the impressions are very strong, and I know will stay with me...and thus I was able to feel a certain confidence in every situation.

Most students also seem to have an ingrained feeling that it is the producers of building products, over-night builders, and dollar-developers who are responsible for shoddiness in our environment. Many preceptees returned from their

visits feeling that more responsibility lay with the architects because the architects with whom they had been living and working were strong enough in character, dedication and drive to not let their work and concepts be desecrated by committeemen, contractors and clients whose knowledge and livelihood lay in other fields of endeavor. Again, from John Kell's report:

My views on architecture have changed as a result of the trip. I place more blame at the feet of the architect and less elsewhere for poor design...I feel that administration is as important in architecture as design. Without favorable attitudes from the administrative architect, the designer is simply a voice in the wilderness. I believe the architect should be a strong influence for good in the community; he should be normal, not freakish. I don't think an architect can make a lasting contribution as an architect to a community or profession unless he is a stable, forthright person. An architect must remain young mentally — he must dream, he must keep his idealism, he must be a 'pusher' only to prod himself into action and contribution.

John's preceptor, David Murray offered these comments on their preceptorship:

Our approach to the effort as preceptor was quite informal. We did not try to pre-arrange any definite schedule. Johnny had an opportunity to observe most of the administrative duties, in particular, one or two knotty problems with completed jobs and a contractor and also a couple of informal luncheon engagements with some potential clients. He also spent the better part of one day with our inspector on the assembly center project and saw the early phase of a major concrete structure. He had a chance to see most of Tulsa and take a busman's holiday to see the Price Tower in Bartlesville.

E. Davis Wilcox was representative of the small, quality practice in a small city. Many people seem to equate quality with quantity, but the preceptees with Mr. Wilcox were rewarded with a variety of experience which some larger national firms could not offer because of specialization. L. James McCullar was the first preceptee to work with Mr. Wilcox.

I think it is a rare opportunity for any student in a field to be able to associate with an outstanding person in that field and to be treated as an equal. I can only speak highly of the program and Mr. Wilcox. The success of the program is a function of the preceptor-preceptee relationship, and mainly a function of the preceptor, since the preceptee can only respond to the preceptor's actions.

Because of the range of professional activity and civic involvement, some of the correspondence and reports from Robert Brooks' preceptorship in 1963 will be cited here as a case study. This type of professional practice is especially important because, after all, most students do enter practice in hometowns and in smaller offices.

FRIDAY NIGHT

Dear Mr. Auditt,

Wanted to take time out to drop you a short note in hopes of being able to convey my enthusiasm over my Preceptorship.

I arrived Monday afternoon and have been thoroughly challenged and stimulated by each day's activities. I have a notion of the success of the program stems from the person of the Preceptor, himself. In this light the Wilcoys have far exceeded my most optimistic expectations. I know you are aware of Mr. Wilcox's abilities as a competitor in the design of schools.

I have no doubt but what these two weeks will prove to be more valuable than my entire fourth year. I wish to express my sincerest thanks to those who aided in my selection as a preceptor.

Sincerely yours,

Robert Frosch

1000

...because the ... work and concepts ... and livelihood lay ... reports

... I place ...

... 2000

... 2000

... James McCuller

...

... 1965 ...

4604 Pine Street
Bellaire, Texas
May 7, 1963

Mr. W. W. Caudill
Architecture Department
Rice University
Houston, Texas

Dear Mr. Caudill,

Approaching the end of my formal education in architecture at Rice, I am faced with a growing discontent with the hypothetical problems of a make-believe client, the paper products of our paper outlook, the entire atmosphere of the student's playing architect. The desire to feel the push and pull of practical clients, real budgets, problems on the job, outmoded building codes, and real materials has grown very strong for me. My enthusiasm to get out in this hodge-podge of both good and bad, to correct the wrongs and improve the rights as an architect has increased significantly during the course of this year. The strongest of these urges is to see a project I have worked on take form in brick and mortar, to see it satisfy a real client. Yet my schooling and part time work have rendered these urges unsatisfied until my participation in the Preceptorship Program.

Based on some of my experiences, my expectations of the Preceptorship Program were rather pessimistic. However, the results of my two weeks with E. Davis Wilcox have proven my pessimism wholly unwarranted.

As you know, I am very interested in the place of the small, but very good architect. I am reluctant to believe that the Welton Becketts of the profession will sooner or later engulf the sensitive, individual architect trying to serve his community. My outlook on this matter and my optimism concerning the place for the small architect were strengthened greatly by seeing the high esteem in which the people of Tyler hold Mr. Wilcox and the stature he has attained in the profession. More heartening is the fact that these things have been accomplished by a man of unswerving principles who does not bend with the crowd. I sincerely believe that Dave Wilcox and men like him can do more to advance architecture for the people than many of the idols whom we plagiarize in both school and the profession.

The knowledge which I have gained through my stay with the Wilcoxes is of the very broadest nature. It would be indeed difficult to state objectively what I have learned these past two weeks, yet my outlook on clients, contractors, engineers, and the whole picture of architecture has been greatly affected. I would venture to state, without reservation or qualification, that I value this experience far above the sum total of the remainder of my fourth year in architecture. I can think of no program more beneficial than this for the young architect. Had I known of the true nature of the possibilities of this program, I can assure you that I would have worked far more diligently the first semester to insure my selection.

My deepest thanks go out to those of the staff who aided in both my selection and the selection of Mr. Wilcox as my preceptor. The nature of the preceptor is most basic to the success of the program, for two weeks with a lesser man would be extremely discouraging to even the most determined young architect.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Robert Brooks". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name "Robert Brooks".

Monday, April 22

Arrive in Tyler, meet office staff and Mrs. Wilcox.

Conference after lunch with high school speech teacher, John Tyler High — EDW programing high school to replace old one. Difficult to make this guy understand that we don't want to hear about blackboard requirements, but want to know how speech is taught.

Tuesday, April 23

Supervision trip to Rehabilitation Center in Rusk State Hospital, Rusk, Texas — job is really in a mess with a job superintendent with absolutely no experience.

Conference with officers of Lufkin Country Club over design of new country club facilities to replace those lost in a recent fire. Beautiful site but most of these officers are interested in nothing but "How much will it cost per square foot?"

Return to Rusk, take measurements for new elevator in old building. (This building is actually an old civil war prison converted to serve the needs of the mentally ill. The most depressing atmosphere I have ever been in. How can the state officials be so blind to basic human values and the need for proper environment?)

Conference with 11 high school students (Cleon, EDW and me). These students displayed a far more sensitive understanding of the basic problems than the I-need-two-blackboards-teachers who are entrusted with their education. The students confirmed the validity of many of the ideas which we threw at them. They are ready for much more in the way of education and are eager to go to school for a longer day if it will improve the educational atmosphere which, at present, is frightfully unstimulating.

Wednesday, April 24

Talk about preliminary for Lufkin Country Club — began preliminary sketches based on EDW's program and concepts.

Supervision trip to Tyler Junior College gymnasium and planetarium. This job is really going well; the superintendant and many of his men really do know how to think. Have designed simple, but ingenious method of reusing forms for folded plate roof.

Tile salesman came in the office with horrible film and tried to sell us on their ceiling tile. This guy knew next to nothing about his product.

Talk with local Catholic priest about my church design problem at school — a most intelligent man who has done some painting and is very much interested in contemporary architecture's solving the needs of the church.

Discuss state licensing exam with EDW — he is to write the question on history of architecture this year and wants me to help him write it, or write it for him. Read over some of the past exams — these guys are really in trouble — the past exams are really a joke, having nothing to do with what an architect should know about the history of architecture.

Dinner with Bergfelds — local business family of much success.

Thursday, April 25

Continue work on Lufkin C.C.

Drive to Kilgore and Longview — pay visit to B. W. Crain, not in. Visit several residences by EDW.

Dinner party in evening — all the Tyler wheels present. Long disertation by intoxicated member about how architects should design French Provencial residences.

Friday, April 26

Continue to work on Lufkin C.C. — try new slant, throw away all old sketches.

Supervision trip to Tyler Junior College gym — their campus is in a sinful condition thanks to the architecture.

Trip to remodeling job at local doctor's residence — pacify them about the planting in the garden area.

Hay fever reaches all-time high, beg off party at local country club.

Saturday, April 27

Work on country club.

Meet EDW at country club for lunch after his golf game. Club is gem of eclecticism.

Visit antique shop owned by EDW's mother. Drinks with friends of EDW, dinner later.

Sunday, April 28

Church, check office mail, study.

Monday, April 29

Work on Lufkin C.C.

EDW shows me his business side of the practice, charging clients, etc.

Salvation Army luncheon — discuss budget with members of the board.

Visit some jobs by EDW, mostly residences.

Visit home remodeling of friend — must have been dissatisfied with EDW scheme; our unexpected visit found plans by some Ft. Worth architect on the job — he completely ruined it, but managed to include all the "cute" things the client has seen in GOOD HOUSEKEEPING.

Tuesday, April 30

Work on history of architecture exam.

Try to find coach for local Little League in which EDW's son plays.

Supervision trip to Rusk Hospital — job continues to become a greater mess every day.

Attend high school baseball game.

Drinks at Bracken house, a TSA winner several years ago.

Wednesday, May 1

Revise architectural history exam — end up using two questions by EDW and one by me.

Discuss my church problem with Cleon (Bellamy).

Supervision trip to gymnasium.

Attend PTA meeting with Wilcoxes — Mark Wilcox sings in sixth grade program.

Visit Tyler Marina by EDW — pretty nice considering very tight budget.

Do rough sketches of hilltop residence that Cleon is working on — try to talk him out of A-frame thing. EDW joins my side in the discussion.

Drinks at doctor's house by EDW — one of the most interesting residences I have ever been in.

"A farewell dinner" at Tyler Club with Wilcoxes.

Thursday, May 2

Work on hilltop residence — A-frame proves highly unworkable, but Cleon still convinced.

Rehash planetarium with contractor — seems that even the most reputable are trying to cut corners if you aren't looking.

Meet with school administrators over EDW's preliminary ideas which have evolved as a result of his programing. Superintendent of school system seems highly receptive and unusually sensitive to factors of real importance to the educational experience. Principals of the two high schools respond well to ideas aimed at solving the inefficient facets of the operation of a high school. Most other members seem strangely silent as if it is beyond their comprehension. It is frightful to think that some of these men are holding the reins in education today. There begins a ridiculous discussion over materials and insurance — when the facts are brought forth it shows that their concern is over an annual premium increase of \$500 for a 2000-pupil high school, yet still they continue to allow insurance fire ratings to govern design. EDW and Cleon point out fallacies in present insurance set-up, but it falls on deaf ears. Administrators close by vote of confidence for EDW's basic approach — preliminary studies and sketches to begin tomorrow.

Goodbyes — leave for home.

Expansion of the program geographically and numerically is the greatest change in the program. This is both a mark of success and an indication of the goals of the Preceptorship Program. The number of preceptors has been increased from six to seven plus the special preceptorship arrangements. The geographic distribution has spread from the South and Southwest to coast to coast and from the Gulf to the Great Lakes.

The longest jump in distance, however, was initiated by a Houston preceptor, John M. Rowlett, who provided the most unique preceptorship for his preceptee, John Young, a fifth year student. They left Houston in March, 1963, for a one month tour which included visits to several university campuses in the United States and a visit to the offices of the Ford Foundation in New York, with the objective of Manila in the Philippine Islands. Enroute they visited San Francisco, Hawaii and Japan. Their reports could pass for the itineraries of tourists except for the inclusion of the heavy business schedules, the notes on international cultural orientation, and the underlying documentation of the problems and responsibilities inherent in having two men serve as consultants from the occident to the orient for consultation with educators about agricultural facilities for a university in the Philippines.

The Rowlett and Young trip might be classified as too unusual to be of real benefit to stateside architectural practice, but the scope of architectural practice and long-range planning is taking many architects abroad as consultants for private concerns, governmental agencies, and philanthropic foundations. This type of architectural practice might well become commonplace in the future. Besides, insight into man is not a local function, and the problems of designing for clients is universal.

John Young summed up some of the feelings of all the preceptees in his report. In the gift of such educational experience, the enlightenment is its own reward.

I would like to offer you something you have not expected of me, the debt which I feel I owe you for the generous encouragement...I must repay you with the feeling of confidence I have acquired, with the feeling of accomplishment, the feeling of purpose, and the feeling of opportunity that have been provided me, both here and in the Philippines...I hope for a chance to do the kind of work which would make you proud of your allowances for me.

Mr. Rowlett was first considered to be a "special preceptor," but because of the programs which could be offered by Caudill, Rowlett and Scott, Mr. Rowlett became a regular preceptor. During the current 1964 preceptorship, his preceptee, Patrick James, a graduate student, worked as part of a design team on the campus of Duke University. In addition to orientation time, this preceptorship consisted of a one week charrette in which Pat worked with professional designers, programmers, university planners and architects and university officials at the site of the proposed design.

All of the preceeding suggestions and recommendations were submitted by the participants. There are, however, many criticisms and suggestions which were not offered by persons personally involved in their own fraction of the overall program. This fractionalization or fragmentation itself is one of the chronic problems of the Preceptorship Program. One preceptee does not benefit directly from the experiences of another. Also, the student who has not been a preceptee can only benefit by association. An analogy can be made to the rewards of a scholarship. The fact that one student wins a competition with a monetary prize helps establish the academic standing of the school, and this is a recommendation of the quality sought by that school, but the money won by one student doesn't pay the bills of the other students. The student who has not served as preceptee gains indirectly from his school's reputation in the national market of graduates and from association with students with broader knowledge of the profession. If the Preceptorship Program is to be associated with the identity of the caliber of a school's educational program, it should touch all the students. At least in a department of the cohesive size which exists at Rice University, the Preceptorship Program touches all students either directly or indirectly as the upper level classes assume a more professional orientation to architectural education. The perfection of the Preceptorship Program would be to have all students participate in the program prior to receiving their professional degree, to have the preceptorship experience as an integral part of the academic program.

To increase the size of the program would involve problems perhaps beyond the resources of the individual school of architecture. To obtain the delicate matching of personalities and abilities would entail maintaining commitments from a myriad of architects. How many architects recognize this responsibility? How many have a working schedule or the finances to accept this responsibility? If the quality of the architect were to be lowered to fill a quota, the purpose of the program would be defeated.

The matching of personalities also necessitates close personal associations between the faculty committee and the preceptors. A personal knowledge of both the architect's practice and his home life is needed before a successful selection can be made. Unless the necessary balance is obtained, the program fails in its basic attempt at empathy. This, perhaps, makes the program float on a dangerous oil of personality and personal choice.

What happens when a student is a preceptee and the hoped for rapport is not achieved? Does he come home and forget the whole thing, or does he start over? In a less drastic case, what about a student who visits a preceptor one year, but whose ability and professional talents indicate that a second preceptorship would be even more valuable than the first? The solution: a student should be eligible for selection as a preceptee more than one time. If his first visit occurs during his fourth year, he may be selected again during his fifth year.

Also, what about the tremendous remedial value of the preceptorship? The student really needing professional association to redefine his professional goals either is arbitrarily excluded from the program because he must be an honor student in architecture, or he is selected for participation because of his deficit in professional outlook. Perhaps the nomenclature is inaccurate, and the criteria for honors for the preceptee should read, "A student whose preceptorship reports reflect high professional standards is designated an 'Honor Student in Architecture.'" In other words, an ipso facto approach to the realm of architectural honors. Since the experience of the preceptorship is to develop in the student the dedication to become a leader in the profession, it should make of him an exemplary (or honor) student, which is, of course, the purpose of the program.

When all these problems are considered, the ground rules do require some revisions. The following are offered as refinements incorporated in the original ground rules of 1962:

1. The architect should have the strongest voice in setting the dates of the visitation to insure selection of a time which provides the greatest possible exposure to the profession for the student.
2. The architect is encouraged to allow the student to participate in as many presentations and client operations as possible so the student will be more aware of the architect-client relationship.
3. Because of the tremendous personal outlay on the part of the preceptors and their families in time, money, and convenience, the preceptorships may be rotated on a broader basis to give greater flexibility.
4. The geographical distribution and number of preceptors will increase — ideally to allow all graduates to have participated either during their senior, fifth, or graduate year.
5. The basic time limit of two to three weeks will remain the same, but the duration may be extended at the wishes of the preceptor and preceptee.
6. A student can be selected as a preceptee more than one time.
7. "Special Preceptorships" may be arranged for special projects.

An eighth item is only a recommendation — that the preceptors visit the department whenever possible so they may become better acquainted with the educational program, the faculty, and the students of the department.

The faculty of the Department of Architecture, of Rice University, feel that the

program was a success for the students. This evaluation might be biased, but it is the bias of success from persons who wanted the program to work. Architects, faculty and students unanimously supported the program. Any project with this type of support would have to be sabotaged not to succeed.

Now, will it transplant? Yes, if the support of the program is as enthusiastic, energetic, and resourceful as it is at Rice University. The program needs the support of not only the architectural faculty and administration, but the faculty of other academic disciplines. Also, one must seek out only the peak of quality in the profession to serve as examples. Anything less would be a detriment to the students and the profession.

The students' reports listed diverse functions of the architect in his dealing with clients, contractors, consultants, fellow architects, bankers, accountants, and family. The students met with governors, visiting lecturers, research personnel, and all types of V.I.P.'s. They attended ballets, symphonies, church, jazz concerts, and dined with the Boy Scouts of America, Rotarians, cultural groups, and watched fiestas, golf matches, and the people on the street in different cities. They appraised the building of cities and the planting and painting of flowers. They walked, they flew on business trips to confer with clients, they took bus rides to view landmarks. They even counted pages in the compilations of specifications. They attended board meetings of organizations as diverse as the Salvation Army and the local bank.

For at least two weeks, each student lived as an architect. It will take some of these students twenty or thirty years to attain the stature of their preceptors, but at least each knows more about the criteria of value in the profession. Each knows that at least one man in the profession has attained personal and professional success. Each knows because he has lived a portion of that man's life with him.

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